

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mocean Dance in full sail

Halifax's vanguard contemporary dance company presents a world premiere by an internationally acclaimed Canadian choreographer inspired by an iconic Nova Scotia landmark.

HALIFAX, NS – March 9, 2015: Choreographer Serge Bennathan's dance works are characterized by a sense of space, freedom and power. His new creation, *Sable Island*, embodies all the relentless sway of the fierce ocean encircling the mythic isle and the mystery and untamed spirit of the wild horses that live there.

Sable Island is the anchor for Halifax-based Mocean Dance's mainstage program that opens at Alderney Landing Theatre on April 30 and runs until May 2. Entitled *Close Reach*, a nautical reference to sailing close to the wind, the program also features a remount of *Live from the Flash Pan* by Nova Scotia choreographer, actor, composer and director Cory Bowles. Mocean originally commissioned the piece in 2010.

Founded in 2001, Mocean has earned critical acclaim and a national reputation as one of the leading professional dance companies in Atlantic Canada. "Halifax's premiere contemporary company...manages to be audience friendly without veering into dance lite." Paula Citron, *The Globe and Mail*

Collaborating with many of the country's leading contemporary choreographers, the company has also toured nationally and conducted residencies and workshops in Canada and the United States.

Mocean is charting an ambitious course with *Sable Island*, which showcases not only the work of one of Canada's most celebrated contemporary choreographers, but also features an original musical score created for the production by Montreal composer Bertrand Chénier. Mr. Chénier will also perform on stage with the dancers during each show.

The work is also a physical and artistic challenge for the five seasoned company dancers on whom the piece is set. For Mr. Bennathan, the commitment of the artists was as much of a driving force for the 40-minute piece as was its mystical subject matter. "I am facing five outstanding artists who are accepting the fact of being artists even when it is a battle to be one. I find that courage beautiful," he says.

“We wanted to work with Serge because we knew he would test our dancers physically, and interpretively, and create a work that would highlight their maturity and depth as artists and women,” explained Mocean Artistic Director, Susanne Chui, who is also one of the dancers.

Originally from France, where he directed his own company in Cannes, Serge Bennathan has significantly influenced the development Canada’s contemporary dance genre since his arrival in 1985. Currently Artistic Director of Vancouver-based Les Productions Figlio, he was, for over a decade, Artistic Director of Toronto’s Dancemakers, where his work was recognized with two Dora Awards. He is also the 2012 recipient of the prestigious Rio Tinto Alcan Performing Arts Award – Dance.

Tickets for *Close Reach* featuring *Sable Island* are on sale now:

- **online at** ticketpro.ca (search Mocean);
- **by phone at** Alderney Landing Box Office – (902) 461-8401;
- **in person at** Alderney Landing Box Office – Second Level, 2 Ochterloney Street, Dartmouth. <http://www.alderneylanding.com/events/>

Ticket Prices (excluding Ticketpro fees): Regular: \$25; students, seniors, artists: \$20; dance students and children under 10: \$15; groups of 6 or more: \$18 individual.

- For more information on Mocean Dance and *Close Reach* visit: <http://www.moceandance.com>
- For more information on Serge Bennathan visit: <http://lesproductionsfiglio.ca/about/>
- Get a behind the scenes look at the creation of *Sable Island*: <http://www.michelledoucettephotography.ca/blog> (February 10, 2015)
- Learn more about the mystery and romance of Nova Scotia’s Sable Island: <http://www.cbc.ca/gsa/?q=sable+island&gns=SEARCH>

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Media Contact:

Sheila Duggan: ☎ 1 902 532 1399 ✉ duggan@bellaliant.net